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# CAMATKĀRA

## THE HIDDEN PATH

by Igor Kufayev



**Find what you love, and let that become your obsession. Be taken over by that quality. That possession is a quality of your Awareness. Invoke the essence of beauty, as the Goddess there, waiting to be uncovered. Let her take you over. Every cell, every fiber - be the worshiper. Worship her in everything, in every way. So that life is no longer life. Life becomes nothing that one can call life, but an act of worship. Let the essence of beauty take you over, gradually - and then suddenly. Let it ravish you. Open yourself up. Willingly surrender to that, and melt into the embraces. And become the beauty and the love that you are. This is the path. This is to bring the Goddess, through and into everything you do...**



Certain terms, prevalent in non-secular dialogues, remain elusive to categorization. Though universally recognized as foundational to the human psyche, they are often obscured by the glossy veneer which conceals their real meaning. A telling example is Dostoevsky's hermetic, if not impenetrable "Beauty will save the world," still causing considerable unease 150 years after it was spoken by the main character of his novel. Taken at its face value, the saying sounds idealistic and far removed from the realities of the world and our experience of it. After all, what has the term *beauty* come to mean in our world today, let alone saving it. What is the hidden message behind the words of the Russian writer, whose explorations into the depth of the human condition are unparalleled, whose literary work is foundational to the history of existentialism?

We know that for Dostoevsky, *beauty*, along with *truth* and *justice*, are parts of a trinity. For beauty here, cannot be separate from truth. Nor is

truth ever an abstract reality - our experience of truth is a tangible confirmation that ennobles our understanding. Just as mathematicians look for harmony and symmetry in unlocking the laws of nature as a validation of their breakthroughs, the true experience of beauty is a confirmation of truth through direct perception. In this respect, what is set to save the world is the *realization of beauty*, as an inherent ability to cognize truth in the most direct of ways. For it is the often multilayered experience of beauty that makes truth a tangible reality.

Whether or not Dostoevsky invested his message with Christian theological perspectives, there is a direct analogy traceable to Vedic thought, which defined three major aspects of the *Absolute* - the ultimate reality: *Truth*, *Auspiciousness* and *Beauty*, known in Sanskrit as *Satyam*, *Śivam*, *Sundaram*. Accordingly, the otherwise attribute-less Absolute has these foundational, fundamental qualities. The first two, Truth (*Satyam*) and Auspiciousness (*Śivam*), are imperceptible and abstract. They can only be experienced "inwardly." It is only *Sundaram*,

the experience of Beauty, that is open to direct perception. In other words, we can have the most intimate experience of our Divine Self anytime a wave of beauty takes us over.

These terms *Satyam*, *Śivam* and *Sundaram*, in turn, are expressions of the well-known Vedic epithet *Sat Cit Ānanda*, "Being Consciousness Bliss." *Satyam* as absolute Truth stands for *Being*; *Śivam* stands for *Auspiciousness of Conscious Experience* which affords the possibility of knowing *Being*; and *Sundaram* as the expression of *Ānanda, Bliss*. It is through *Ānanda* that this quality of Consciousness, perceiving itself as *Being*, can be palpably experienced through *Bliss*. Beauty is synonymous with *Ānanda, Bliss*. One is the expression of the other. *Ānanda* is the only tangible experience. Every joy - however fleeting, however intense - one way or another, is an expression of *Ānanda*.

Again, when we speak of these fundamental qualities of the Absolute (*Satyam*, *Śivam*, *Sundaram*), it is only the quality of Beauty that is available to perception. It is the only tangible aspect of the Self that can be experienced amidst daily life, and this is what makes it so formidable and accessible at the same time. It is available throughout and permeates all of creation. This is why we crave beauty, in whatever way, in whatever form. We crave it simply because beauty synergizes an intimate experience of our true Self.

But what is Beauty? Beauty is an indispensable aspect of the Absolute, as our Awareness. It is a *substratum*; what is *spread underneath*. Beauty, here, as an expression of *Ānanda*, is an ever-present catalyst. The true experience of beauty is a spontaneous and powerful wave that takes over the separate sense of self, even if temporarily. Beauty is open to all the senses, and yet, it is beyond the experience of the senses as it is foundational as a substrate.

There is the beauty of a child's face, of a young woman, of an old man, of a tree, of anything that our eye gets captivated by. We experience beauty whenever there is the direct cognition of the essence of who we are being reflected back to us through the form that we behold. Artists and poets know this intuitively even if they will not necessarily be able to explain this. This experience of beauty is not limited to visual form. We can speak of the beauty of a touch, the beauty of a sound, the beauty of a fragrance, the beauty of a taste. And from

there on, these get subtler and subtler as we can perceive the beauty of a feeling, the beauty of a thought. If we are attentive enough, we can experience directly, palpably, the beauty of a movement or the beauty of stillness, where everything subsides. In fact, there is no such thing as an experience of *nothing*, because if nothingness is experienced attentively enough, it is Beauty in its most still and quiescent of ways.

There is beauty in every aspect of the way we are made, if only we pay close enough attention. There is beauty in myriad unnoticed acts - such as in the simple act of breathing, in the simple act of walking, in the simple act of sitting. There is beauty in beholding the world with eyes open. There is beauty in beholding the world with eyes closed. All this is steeped in beauty and conceived in beauty. It is all made for the sake of the experience of beauty. Therefore, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or not, we always seek Beauty. In fact, we might even say that we don't even seek God - we actually, secretly, seek Beauty, because it is the most perceptible, experientially available communion with God....

Indeed, there is no way to know God so intimately other than through the experience of Beauty - and intuitively we know this. Therefore, we are always driven to beauty; and perhaps even more essentially, we are driven by it. This is a very comforting, reassuring and equally profound understanding because beauty is the supreme form of the Goddess. It is *Śakti* Herself in Her full magnificence. And that magnificence is for the sake of *Śiva's* enjoyment. Whenever we experience beauty, our awareness rejoices. Beauty is the most healing and wholesome experience. Nothing is superior to the experience of beauty and recognizing that truth makes us devoted worshippers. When we worship beauty, inadvertently, at heart we worship the most intimate part of ourselves. In craving intimacy with the Divine through the experience, we find the most direct communion with the Divine. This is the path of *aesthetic rapture*. This is *Camatkāra*—the perpetual sense of wonder. It is the delight that rises spontaneously from the void of the heart, from the core of our being, whenever and wherever we behold beauty in any of its forms. Therefore, *seek Beauty and you will find God.* 🌸

### MEET THE AUTHOR



An artist, Advaita Tantra teacher and founder of the Flowing Wakefulness organisation, **IGOR KUFAYEV** has been serving as a conduit

of transmission for awakening towards the new era of heart-centered consciousness for over two decades. Igor's debut book, *Camatkāra: The Hidden Path*, is a lucid exposition on Tantra's most compelling outlook, which offers an alluring perspective on the role of aesthetic astonishment in our daily life, and ultimately points to the purpose of human experience. Igor resides in Mallorca, Spain with his partner Amrita Ma Devi and their three children.

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### Bookshelf

**CAMATKĀRA: THE HIDDEN PATH BY IGOR KUFAYEV**, published by SONG Publishing. Available as a limited edition hardback or in paperback (144 pages)

